

Rio Vista Estuarine Research Station (RVERS) Fact Sheet

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What is RVERS?

- “RVERS” is *Rio Vista Estuarine Research Station*, a proposed scientific field station to be constructed on the decommissioned City of Rio Vista Army Base.
- The project would house the Interagency Ecological Program (IEP), a consortium of nine state and federal agencies that has conducted much of the aquatic monitoring in the Delta over the past 40 years.

Who would work at RVERS?

- RVERS would consolidate over 160 agency employees into one location.
- Most staff would be from US Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, with additional staff from US Bureau of Reclamation and California Department of Water Resources.
- The majority of the staff would be field biologists and laboratory assistants--there would be substantial support from engineers, technicians, computer scientists & office staff.

What are the project details?

- The current design requires approximately 10 acres total.
- A total of 107,000 square feet is required for operations including:
Office space: 13,000 square feet Boat storage: 38,000 square feet
Laboratories: 7,600 square feet Shop: 18,000 square feet
Warehouse & storage: 25,000 square feet.
- In addition, RVERS will feature will include conference rooms, employee break rooms, a computer room, a locker room, and a reception area.
- Additional needs include:
 - Boat ramp and dock with slips (~16 boats).
 - Parking for office vehicles (46), employees (78), and the public (37).

What are the linkages between RVERS and proposed hatchery in the region?

- RVERS is being planned in conjunction with a proposed USFWS Regional Fish Technology Center, a 15-20 acre facility that will include a delta smelt hatchery.
- The combination of the two projects will create a regional center for the conservation and study of delta smelt and other native fishes.

Why is Rio Vista the best location?

- A detailed study by the State of California identified Rio Vista as the best alternative for RVERS because it is centrally-located, has waterfront access, is an ideal property (decommissioned Army Base), and has low risk of damage from floods or earthquakes.

How would RVERS help address the current Delta crisis?

- Improved science should reduce the extreme economic costs of managing delta smelt and other fishes.

- The delta smelt refuge and the Rio Vista facility are included in President's *Interim Federal Action Plan for the California Bay-Delta* (Dec. 22, 2009).
- This type of science and conservation is critical for a Delta solution.

Why do the agencies support RVERS?

- RVERS would reduce IEP operations costs over 20-25 years.
- Current IEP facilities are substandard and agencies not co-located, hindering the ability to do good collaborative science.

Who else supports RVERS?

- Unlike many other controversial issues in the region, this project is widely supported by local universities, water users, and environmental groups.

How would RVERS help the local community?

- The project would bring a large number of professional jobs to the region.
- RVERS is being designed to integrate with the proposed City of Rio Vista Delta Interpretive Center.
- Partnerships between RVERS and local schools are likely (e.g. internships).
- RVERS, refuge and proposed interpretive center would generate substantial public interest, helping to improve Rio Vista's standing as a regional center for Delta issues.

How much would the project cost?

- The estimate for RVERS is \$65 million.
- The project is currently planned as a *Lease-to-Own* project, where the RVERS would be built by a private developer, but the State would own the facilities after 20-25 years.
- Under the Lease-to-Own plan, \$11 million would be needed as a one-time initial cost. The remainder of the costs would be incurred as part of an annual lease.

How would RVERS be funded?

- The Lease-To-Own option has been approved by California Department of Finance.
- The State Water Contractors support the State's share of RVERS.
- Funding for the Federal share remains to be secured. Options include Federal support for initial increase in yearly operations costs; or an appropriation to "capitalize" the Federal portion of the project (e.g, \$30 million).

How might future water planning affect RVERS?

- Efforts such as the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and the Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Plan could substantially increase research and monitoring needs in the Delta.
- Hence, additional facilities and staffing are expected in the future.

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City of Rio Vista Army Base – 28 Acres